8.

NATURE:

A

POEM.

Ο ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ ΤΟΙΟΥΤΟΣ, ΟΙΟΝ ΓΕΝΕΣΙΣ, ΦΥΣΕΩΣ, ΜΥΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ, ΣΥΓΚΡΙΣΙΣ ΕΚ ΤΩΝ ΑΥΤΩΝ ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΩΝ ΕΙΣ ΤΑΥΤΑ· ΟΔΩΣ ΔΕ ΟΥΚ ΕΦ' ΩΝ ΑΝ ΤΙΣ ΑΙΣΧΥΝΘΕΙΝ· Τ ΓΑΡ ΠΑΡΑ ΤΟ ΕΞΗΣ ΤΩ ΝΟΕΡΩ ΖΩΩ, ΤΑΔΕ ΠΑΡΑ ΤΟΝ ΛΟΓΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗΣ.

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M DCC XC.

NATURE.

A

POEM.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE AUTHOR of this little Piece long entertained an Idea, that he himſelf was poſſeſſed of a certain Meaſure of poetical Talents, but a Succeſſion of laborious Purſuits, of a very different kind, long prevented him from putting them to any fair Trial.——A few weeks ago, he, at laſt, found leiſure to make the Attempt that is now preſented to the Public, as the moſt impartial Judge of its Merit. He waits the Opinion that ſhall be formed of it, with no other ſentiment than that of Curioſity. It will inform him whether he is, or is not, poſſeſſed of an Accompliſhment, which, though beautiful in itſelf, has ſeldom proved of much Utility to its Poſſeſſors, and is little eſteemed in the preſent age.—— In this ſtate of Expectation, he ſhall not mention how ſmall a number of Days, or, rather, Hours, it was in his power to dedicate to the Compoſition of this *firſt* Piece, to which he has ever ventured to call the Attention of the Public.

EDINBURGH,
Dec. 11. 1790.

EDINBURGH,
Dec. 11th 1760.

NATURE:

A

POEM.

PART I.

CELESTIAL Spirit! Thou whoſe potent breath
Inſpires and animates, pervades and fills
The mighty univerſe; immortal Source
Of action and of life! Thee I invoke.
To know and love thee is our excellence,
And trueſt joy. Pour, then, into my ſoul
The fair idea of that plan of love,
Which, in far diſtant ages, was contriv'd,
Long e'er the fires of heav'n were lighted up;
And ſtill employs the counſels of the ſkies.

Support to heights untrod, and new to ſong,
The fiery wings of Fancy, while ſhe tries
To riſe to thee; and, daringly contemplative,
Aſpires to ſcan thy high, myſterious ways;
The paſt and future ſearches; and unfolds
The ſource and end of nature and of man.

At what great æra of Jehovah's reign?—
What period in the hiſtory of gods,
And of the univerſe, ſhall Fancy ſeize
Her daring ſtation? Thence to caſt around
On worlds unnumber'd, and their Maker's deeds,
A keener glance than e'er archangel ſhot,
When ſent acroſs the diſtant univerſe
To ſuccour virtue:—Shall ſhe fly far back
To diſtant times before this earth was form'd?
And farther ſtill, to other worlds that ran
Their mighty race; and other orbs of fire
Extinguiſh'd long e'er ours blaz'd forth in heav'n?
Nor reſting there, ſtill ſhall ſhe farther mount
Back: And, ſtill farther, to the mighty ſource
And origin of things; the dreadful date
Mark'd in Heaven's regiſter; when the Almighty Sire
Of nature and exiſtence, roſe and pour'd
Afar, around, the copious, fiery floods

Of

Of Reaſon, Senſibility, and Joy?
Or ſhall ſhe riſe, above the ſoaring moon,
And penetrate beyond the diſtant ſtars,
And leave beneath her, in her fiery flight,
The ſun and all his glories, and proceed
To the laſt limits, and the verge of nature?——
Then plunge into the awful, vaſt profound,
Soaring where ſeraphs tremble and withdraw;
'Till after this dread flight at laſt ſhe view,
Afar, the glories of another heav'n,
And other forms of things, and other life,
And better virtues under fairer ſkies?
No: Let her chuſe a humbler theme,
But ſtill immortal:—Of the birth of worlds,
The pow'rs of nature, and the fate of man,
She ſings, in ſounds remote from vulgar thought.

FROM the rude ſummit of yon hoary mount,
So deeply furrow'd by the wint'ry rain,
Abroad on NATURE let me gaze around,
And view the wonders of the various ſcene:
The rugged rocks and buſy haunts of men
Preſſing each other; 'midſt the fertile vales,
The waving fields, the woods, the crouded flocks,
The giddy precipice, the mountain vaſt,

The

The ſwelling ocean and its winding ſhore,
The frequent village, mark'd by wreathing ſmoke,
The diſtant hills cover'd with clouds or ſnows,
All thrown together in confuſion vaſt,
Marking the rich magnificence of Nature.

O NATURE! (for we have no other name
For all theſe powerful, ſecret, energies,
That live, and act, and clothe with life and beauty
This varied earth:) What art thou? ſay; and, Whence?
What latent virtue lurks in the green ſod,
And to the gentle eye of Spring reveals
The baſhful beauties, hid from ſurly Winter?
What ſpirit, hidden deep within the root,
Pours forth the apple, or the ſmiling roſe?
Say, Who rewards the labourer's hard toil,
When deep in earth the ſeed corrupted lies,
Yet riſes fair to give the nations bread?
Unnumber'd are the forms in which this pow'r
Of vegetation marks its ſecret force,
Unknown, and humbling ſtill the pride of wiſdom.

THESE depths if ſcience have not yet explor'd,
Far harder depths remain that mock her ſearch.—
Whence is the ſpirit that ariſing high

Above

Above the plant, gives to the faithful dog
To watch his maſter's look; but ſtill denies
The tow'ring ſenſe divine of good and ill,
Of beauty and deformity, which thinks,
Compares and judges, weighs and balances
The future and the paſt; even counts the ſtars,
Searches the myſteries of fate, and learns
From known events to ſcan the ways of Heav'n?
What is the ſenſe that lives in brutes; and whence
The glowing fire that fills the human form?
Say, Does the mighty Maker, watchful ſtill,
Create, and pour into the infant's brain
A ſpirit newly form'd? Or is there built,
In ſome waſte corner of the univerſe,
A great receptacle of ſouls prepar'd,
And ready faſhion'd? for inactive clay
Cannot perform the offices of thought.
Whence came the ardent ſpirit that informs
The keen-ey'd eagle in his flight ſublime?
High too his energies above the force
Of dead, inactive matter. Even the plant
Of ſimpleſt hue on yonder yellow mead,
Has powers and force above material far.
Let Learning anſwer, if ſhe can, theſe doubts,
For well ſhe knows the ſayings of the wiſe:

Let Science gueſs with all her deep reſearch—
But Learning has not read, nor Science thought
Of that high Pow'r which ſpreads the ſimpleſt bud;
And ſhall they ſcan theſe deeper myſteries,
Which only angels knew, and ſcarce reveal'd
In whiſpers to their poet's favour'd ear?

Two jarring ſubſtances compoſe this earth,
And all the frame of things: One dead and cold,
Sluggiſh, unfeeling, prone to endleſs reſt.
On this the Omnipotent CREATOR laid
His potent hand; and ſlowly faſhion'd it,
By many a proceſs needleſs here to tell.
To give it then capacity of life,
He pour'd around, and into all its parts,
A pure, celeſtial, animating fire;
A reſtleſs, keen, and penetrating ſpirit;
A portion, ſhall I call it, of himſelf?
This piercing, active ſpirit, lays faſt hold
On matter; moulds, commands, and actuates it;
And, ever reſtleſs, agitates its parts.
Itſelf alive, it forms them into life:
And, if its action were not wiſely rul'd,
Would ſpend its ardent force in forming monſters.
Amid the coldneſs of the winter-ſnows,

When

When every clod is bound, it cannot act:
Its force is greateſt, when the heat melts down,
And ſoftens every particle, unleſs
Sublim'd too high, th' unfiniſh'd forms diſſolve.
But when it meets with matter well-diſpos'd,
It moulds it up to beauty and to life;
Itſelf all-living, and the ſoul of nature.

THIS is th' enliv'ning ſpirit that retains
The planets in their courſe, aſpiring ſtill,
To reach thoſe ample portions of itſelf,
On all with like munificence beſtow'd.
Together to the ſun's vaſt orb is roll'd
A maſs enormous, likewiſe all inſpir'd
By the ſame ſpirit; to this leſſer worlds,
That float around in æther ſtrongly tend,
Prevented by the high impulſive force,
Giv'n when they firſt began their mighty race,
From ruſhing down into his flaming orb:
Their revolutions give the fair returns
Of ev'ry ſeaſon, pleaſing in its time.

WHEN the great artiſt, whoſe myſterious ways
Are not like thoſe of man, toilſome and hard,
Doubtful and hurried, but magnificent

With

With grand ſimplicity; whoſe eye diſcerns,
The diſtant, grand reſult of eaſieſt means;
When he began th' accompliſhment of all
His plan of goodneſs, to give life and joy
To happy beings, firſt, with curious ſkill,
He faſhion'd fair the ſeeds of future births,
Of ev'ry bud that blows and ev'ry herb,
From the white lilly weeping o'er the brook,
To the vaſt oak whoſe branches fight the ſtorm,
Whoſe ruin'd trunk to diſtant ages gives
An awful image of mortality.
When all were form'd, the mighty huſbandman,
Sow'd in the earth the various ſeeds of things,
Of wond'rous texture, fitted to ſupport
The action of the ſp'rit already pour'd,
Thro' nature, them it quick, and active ſeiz'd,
And animated, gath'ring all around
The particles beſt fitted to unite,
And enter thro' the veſſels of the root
To riſe into the future form, deſign'd
By the wiſe Artiſt; thus the parent ſeed,
Then caſt into the earth, and mould'ring,
Is only op'ning all its pores and veſſels
To give admiſſion to thoſe balmy juices,
Which the great, active, all pervading ſpirit,

Kindles

Kindles within it into life and form;
Obſerving ſtill the deep, mechanic laws,
Fix'd as its conſtitution, when it firſt
Proceeded from its great CREATOR's hand.——
Thus ſimply were the various plants and trees,
And ev'ry herb, and ev'ry fruit, and flow'r,
All giv'n to life: The Maker only fram'd
Their diff'rent ſeeds, and gave them to the duſt,
As baits t' allure the ever-active ſpirit,
Which penetrates and dwells in ev'ry clod;
And, all-alive, inſpires with copious life,
All nature; not the vinegar alone,
Or the green, ſtagnant, pool, but ev'ry drop
Of pureſt element: we cannot breathe
The air of heav'n, or taſte the cryſtal ſtream,
And not devour a thouſand little monſters.
Such is the reſtleſs, pregnant energy
Of that great ſpirit, which th' ALMIGHTY's breath
Pour'd round, and thro' the colder maſs of matter.
It ſeizes faſt, and keenly acts upon
The ſeeds of plants, and flow'rs, as fitted well,
To give its pow'rs full ſcope; but if the grain
Fall on the rock or ſand, it cannot find
Juices to pour into it, and enliv'n;—
Which well explains th' effect of adverſe ſoil.

But leaving theſe, let us aſcend to life,
And natures nobler far, where ſenſe is join'd
To vegetating energy in brutes.
The reſtleſs ſpirit that in Nature dwells,
Is active, and alive, in all its parts;
But cannot think, or feel, becauſe diffus'd
Too widely: But encountering, well-diſpos'd,
The ſeeds of plants, a portion of it joins,
Adheres, and rears them up; exerting there
A ſpecimen of thoſe more ardent pow'rs
With which it is endow'd: but, when it finds
The ſeeds of better life, more nicely form'd,
Contriv'd to reach to higher excellence,
On theſe it faſtens; and its active pow'r,
Cheriſh'd and foſter'd near the Source of life,
Collects around the finer particles,
And weaves them with the ſubſtance of the new,
And ſwelling young; which perfect in its parts,
Soon burſts its narrow nurſery, and appears
To light and day; but ſtill attended by
The ſame all-moving ſpirit which informs
Its frame, and from the nouriſhment pour'd in,
Uprears it faſt to beauty and to ſtrength;
Throws off each noxious particle, and ſhuns

Each

Each foreign element that brings diſeaſe.
This is the pow'r, above the doctor's art,
Which fills up every breach, and guards the frame
'Gainſt every poiſon, even againſt his drugs.
But chiefly in the brain of animals,
This fiery, living ſpirit fixes faſt
Its myſtic ſeat; there, wond'rouſly compos'd,
A tender ſubſtance, glowing all with life,
Is plac'd, and for its habitation giv'n:
This, ſpreading o'er the frame, as nerves and fleſh,
Brings notice of the ſtate of things abroad
To the collected ſpirit, faſt enclos'd,
Which there exerts a ſtrength of ſenſe, and thought,
It never knew, while ſcatter'd o'er the waſte
Of raw, unfeeling plants, or colder clay.
Yet to the brutal tribes the portion giv'n
Of this etherial ſpirit, is confin'd
To narrow limits; little can it know,
And ſoon its round of action is complete,
Incapable of higher excellence.
'Tis only in the favour'd frame of man,
That all its high, triumphant energies,
Combine in ev'ry deep, myſterious form
Of Reaſon, Vegetation, and of Senſe.

THE head of man, too pond'rous for his form,
Is rais'd erect; and in its round contains
A larger portion, far, than is beſtow'd
On any animal of equal ſize,
And far more delicately wrought, of fine
And trembling ſubſtance, fitted to receive
The flood immenſe of life, which there reſides,
And acts, and feels, and thinks, with force divine.
The human brain is form'd of matter rich,
Sublim'd into the higheſt purity:
Its nervous elongations, which deſcend,
And clothe the frame with ſenſe in ev'ry part,
Partake the nature of their living ſource;
And, rich with ſpirit, far ſurpaſs the force
That lives within the feebler nerves of brutes.
Thou ſay'ſt the human ſoul excels the brutal—
I tell thee, Human ſtrength excels the brutal,
As far as do its pow'rs of ardent thought:
The ſame o'erflowing ſpirit, reas'ning high
Within the brain, ſhoots forth its fiery ſtrength
Thro' ev'ry poliſh'd limb, and gives it force
Beyond the force of fancy to compute.——
When treading by his ſide, the haughty ſteed,
Of thrice his ſize, is almoſt ſpent, the man

Shall

Shall ſit him down to anxious cares, and toil
Of thought, above corporeal far; for there
The ſpirit waſtes, and agitates the ſoft
And tender fibres round it in the brain.
Remark the human ſtomach; place within
The lion's horrid maw but one ſtrange meal
Of fiſh, and fleſh, and fruit, and ſpices hot,
And liquid fire, he dies before the next;
Yet theſe we daily taſte on ev'ry ſoil,
And under ev'ry ſky, for fourſcore years.
Mark too, the higheſt effort of the plant
Is to produce its kind; theſe pleaſing toils,
Tho' few, and periodical, in brutes,
Exhauſt their frame:—'Tis in the heart of man
That Love erects his throne; his joys full oft,
Moſt deeply trying all the pow'rs of life,
Return reſpected by the god of day;
Who, complaiſant, withdraws his glaring orb,
While the moon's tender beam more ſweetly marks
The glowing cheek and melting eyes of love.

SUCH is the high pre-eminence beſtow'd,
Of thought and ſenſe, of joy, and ev'n of care,
On man, the lord and pride of Nature's works:
Nature herſelf, or Nature's active ſoul,

Reſiding in his frame, enjoys and rules
Creation all-enliven'd by her pow'r.
When round we gaze on all the ſmiling forms
Of beauty and of life, the ſwelling lawn,
The woods and vales, the mountain tow'ring high
To meet the ſilver clouds, and penſive hear,
Afar, the lowings of the diſtant fold,——
What pow'r diffuſes through the conſcious breaſt,
The tender thrillings of the pureſt joy?
'Tis ſomething dearer ſtill than Reaſon's voice,
And ſwifter in its progreſs to the heart:
It is the quick myſterious pow'r within us,
That vibrates to its own external force,
And views, well pleas'd, the efforts of its pow'r.
But chiefly on the human form it looks,
And moſt the ſympathiſing ſpirit feels,
In quick vibration, human joy or woe;
For there it calls forth all its higheſt ſtrength,
Burns on the cheek, and dwells within the eye,
And poliſhes the graceful, yielding form.
The voice of man gives confidence or terror;
Thro' crowds tumultuous flies th' impaſſion'd ſound,
Sudden, electric,——rouſing every breaſt
To equal joy or rage; hence glancing round

The

The ſmiling circle, the heart beats with joy,
Or melts with pity at the ſight of woe.

O! LET no cruel paſſion, then, intrude
To render man the fierceſt foe of man,
And thus pervert the inſtincts of his nature.
Were we not rear'd of the ſame elements?
The ſame our form, our poiſon, and our life.
A portion of the ſame celeſtial fire,
With all the native ſenſe of ſympathy,
Inhabits ev'ry breaſt:—If the beam fall
Towards thy head, I ſtart; if thou but weep,
My ſpirit yearns within me; if thou ſmile,
A ſenſe of pleaſure kindles in my breaſt.
And can I hate thee then? The ſtars of heav'n
Remain within their orbits by that pow'r
Which fills with life and joy thy breaſt and mine,
And ſhall it fail to teach us tenderneſs?
No, let us love each other; ſure to hate,
Is to urge Nature high againſt herſelf,
And to deſtroy her order and her laws.——
Even let a portion of our tenderneſs
Deſcend beneath us to the lower tribes,
They too partake the ſame ethereal ſenſe;
Tho' ſmall their ſhare, yet let not cruel man

Deſtroy his weaker kindred wantonly,
Nor uſe the higher pow'rs on him beſtow'd,
Rather for harſhneſs than for gentle mercy.

In ancient times, among the ardent ſons
Of Greece and mighty Rome, e'er Science yet
Had fled to ſchools, when moral wiſdom was
The boaſt of high-born minds, when CATO fought,
Nor merely reaſon'd well; when SOCRATES
Stood firſt in courage, as in thought, ſublime,
The truths I ſing were more than half-conjectur'd.
The piercing eye of Stoic wiſdom ſaw,
And knew, the energy which animates
And kindles up the cold, inactive clod
To all the forms of life, and ſenſe, and thought:
But mortal penetration could not trace
The ſacred myſteries of ſkill divine,
Which, darting forward to futurity,
Fancy beholds, and quickly ſhall reveal,
In numbers, aided by that Teacher's voice
Who gave to mortal man immortal hope.

NATURE:

A

POEM.

PART II.

FROM the deep mazes of yon hoary wood,
Aſcending ſlowly up the mount ſerene,
I gaz'd aloft, and on the hills beheld
The ſetting ſun's laſt rays: Mild was the ſky,
And huſh'd and ſilent was the face of things.
The cataract's wild roar was heard afar;
The ruſtling breeze of twilight, ſighing, ſtrew'd
The firſt pale honours of the fading year.—
Abroad I look'd; while ſlowly on my ſoul
Gather'd the cruel images of fate,

And change, and deſolation :—Thick and oft,
The dear ideas ſhot acroſs my heart
Of tender converſe, and of early loves ;
Of alter'd days, and long-loſt amities ;
Of diſappointment, and of ſick'ning care,
And all that ſaddens the ſhort date of man.

YES, few and evil ſurely are his days,
And ſpent amidſt a melancholy ſcene.
Haſt thou ne'er gaz'd upon the paſſing ſtream,
The waning moon, the aged, mould'ring tow'r?
Nor, by the trembling taper, ſighing thought
Of diſſolution, and the lapſe of years ?—
Ill canſt thou know the tender ſentiment
That fills the poet's ſwelling breaſt, when round
He looks on all the faireſt forms of things,
And thinks of that deſtroying, ſecret, pow'r,
Which dwells beneath the foldings of the roſe ;
Which on the cheek of beauty ſits, conceal'd
By ſmiles, and all-ſubduing lovelineſs,
And, ſtealing with the purple current, waſtes
The ſtrong man's force, and gradually ſubdues
The lion's rugged heart, and ſlow conſumes,
And gives to duſt, whatever lives or feels.

ONCE

ONCE I knew well a man of many days,
Soft were his manners, and his heart was mild,
His nature generous, and his ſoul refin'd.
Full early had he trod the paths of praiſe;
The richeſt ſtores of ſcience he had gain'd,
All that the muſe e'er ſung, the wiſe e'er ſaid—
The young man's guardian, and the poor man's freind,
The guide and patron of aſpiring worth,—
Lov'd by the young, reſpected by the old,
And to his country dear.—I ſaw him fall,
And ſmile on death, amidſt a weeping train
That he had rear'd and bleſs'd.——I would have chang'd
The glowing wiſhes and preſumpt'ous hopes,
Of nineteen years for that man's lateſt hour.
Yet I remember well, when gazing on
His lifeleſs frame, the deep and anxious doubt
That then diſturb'd my ſoul, and often ſince
Has riſen in the melancholy hour:
My ſenſes told me—all I ſaw was clay:
And where, ſaid I, is that high, poliſh'd ſoul,
That lately thought, and felt, with gen'rous fire?
Is it for ever fled, diſſolv'd and loſt,
For ſure no trace nor veſtige here remain?
What art thou, Diſſolution! awful pow'r,

Whoſe

Whoſe dire dominion ev'n the good muſt feel,
But from whoſe graſp with horror nature ſtarts?

When the kind, active ſpirit has rear'd up
The various living forms of things to ſtrength,
And full maturity, has fill'd each part
And giv'n the deſtin'd height of excellence,
The ardent principle of life ſtill acts,
And pours new juices through the well known tubes
And veſſels; which, each day depoſiting
Their ſlimy ſubſtance, gradually they fill,
And choke up ev'ry pore; the thirſty frame
Receives no more its freſh ſupplies of rich
And kindly moiſture: next, the narrow veins
Forbid the motion of their genial ſtream,
And old age comes, a dry and wither'd ſtate.
And now, no more the active pow'rs of life
Can animate the harden'd frame; which, clogg'd,
Falls down, ſubdu'd, a maſs of ſtiffen'd clay.
Hence, moiſt and pliant is the infant's form,—
And hence, the firmer limbs of manhood mark
The gradual progreſs of approaching fate.
Hence too the ſoft and female form is fram'd
To reach a far more diſtant date of years,
Did not the ſex's deſtiny prevent.

WHAT then is death? The myſtery is fled.
It is the ſame, in plants, and brutes, and men:
After the direful hour of diſſolution
Each part returns to its own elements;
The body mingling with its kindred duſt,
Loſes its organs, and its finer form:
The fiery, living ſpirit too returns
And joins the all-pervading energy
That lives, and feels, in nature; reſtleſs ſtill,
It goes to rear up other forms to life,
And ſenſe, and beauty by its ardent pow'r.
Thus the ſame ſpirit that once glow'd within
The gallant courſer's cheſt, now ſtagnates in
The oak's tremend'ous ſtrength, or gives the hue
To the dove's neck which once the violet bore.
But chiefly in the human frame is ſeen
Its fiery rage; which, now no more employed
In rearing and ſupporting one great whole,
With fury on the rich materials round
Turns, and uprears them into horrid forms
Of putrefaction dire, and life moſt foul:
Thus the ſame energy that beauty gave,
Cauſes corruption moſt impure in death.

BUT is this all? And is there, then, no hope,
No pleaſing proſpect left of better days—
No ſafe retreat beyond the ſtorms of life,
Where ſuff'ring goodneſs may have reſt at laſt,
And Virtue put forth all her faireſt pow'rs,
And riſe, and flouriſh in a better ſoil?
Where now are fled the wiſe of ancient days,
The poet's fancy, and the patriot's fire,
The hero's ardour, and the idle dream
Of immortality by genius foſter'd?
Are all for ever loſt, diſſolv'd, and gone
Down the dark torrent of devouring time?
Is Nature, then, a monſter that ſends forth,
And quick regorges her own brood again
To deep, and hopeleſs, and accurs'd oblivion?
Ah! cruel ſurely was that angry Pow'r,
Who poliſh'd high this fine, ethereal ſoul,
Gave it to know, and love, and hope, and feel,
And ſigh with elevated ſenſe of joys
More pure, more tender, than this ſtate e'er knew;
Who form'd a nature of aſpiring mould,
Riſing in reaſon ev'n to heights divine,
Merely to quench each tow'ring energy
And blaſt immortal pow'rs in ſavage ſport.

And

And, O my heart! And was it then for this
That early cares conſum'd thy faireſt pow'rs,
And gave thee up to ſorrow, e'er thy time?
In joyleſs toil the years of youth were paſs'd,
Hard ſtruggling up the toilſome ſteep of Science:
And, when around upon the world, and life,
Gazing, with anxious thought, no flowery path,
No pleaſing images of joy were ſeen,
Or proſp'rous days, and happy loves, but cold
And lonely ſeemed the dreary way, no friend
To guide, and no kind guardian hand to ſhield
From all the wrongs of unprotected youth;
And when the ſtorm deſcended, and no ray
From the fair ſtar of hope diſpell'd the gloom,
But cruel diſappointment thicken'd faſt,
And ev'ry ſoft and dearer wiſh was vain;
And when the demon whiſper'd tidings fell
Of eaſy refuge, and a ſhort retreat;
Collecting all thy better powers thou ſtood
Sad, but reſolv'd, and ſcorn'd a mean defeat;
For is not this a place of trial nam'd,
Well choſen by our Judge, to prove our ſtrength:
And ſhall we weakly fly the ſtation giv'n,
Diſpirited, and vanquiſh'd in the ſtruggle,
Unable to ſupport its toils and ſtorms?

Felicity is not the queſtion here;
But, excellence, and goodneſs, to attain.
Yet vain this dream of duty, if no ſtate
Of laſting action, and of joy await.
—Yes, tho' myſterious be its ſacred ways;
Heav'n acts not vainly, nor deſpiſes mercy:
I hear the awful ſanction of the ſkies,
Which iſſu'd dreadful from the ſilver cloud,
With that firſt radiance of created light
That darted far acroſs the dark profound,
Giv'n by th' eternal SIRE, and Source of things,
When deeply counſelling o'er the fate of worlds;
Still ſounding loudly thro' Creation wide,
But loudeſt in the poet's hallow'd ear:——
"Roll on ye orbs, and give to man his date
"Of toil and trial; tell him, in your courſe,
"I reign in mercy, and in truth ſupreme;
"His be the care to tread in virtue's ways,
"And be it mine to watch his final fate;
"His days are number'd, and your fires ſhall fail:
"But ſay, I have ordain'd the day on which
"His ſcatter'd aſhes ſhall attend this voice,
"And riſe at my command to better life,
"And joy ſuch as omnipotence beſtows."—
Such is the dread decree pronounc'd of old,

The

The ways of Providence all thither tend,
And angels wait with awe its conſummation.

YET here a doubt may riſe; if heav'n has fix'd
A ſolemn day on which departed breath
Returning ſhall reanimate the forms
Which once have liv'd on earth? how far extend
Theſe purpoſes of mercy, do they reach
The lower tribes? or will the partial ſkies
Confine their goodneſs to their favourite, man?
And ſhall the brutal rider live for ever,
While low is laid the far more gen'rous ſteed?
Short is the fair reply: The gifts of heav'n
Are never idly laviſh'd: Should the brute
To endleſs years ſurvive, ne'er would its pow'rs
Above the portion now aſſign'd ariſe.
The dog, tho' cunning, ne'er would count the ſtars,
Nor would the gen'rous lion raiſe aloft
His eye ſublime in gratitude to heav'n.
This is the ſacred point, decreed of old
By Wiſdom infinite, where mortal life
Shall end, and where immortal ſhall commence:
They who are capable of endleſs riſe
To higher reaſon, and to purer joy,
To them eternal Providence aſſigns

A date unperiſhing, to give their pow'rs
The wideſt range that infinite can boaſt:
A few ſhort years complete the perfect plan
To feebler natures as their portion giv'n.

'Twas in the Eaſt, the human race began
Their grand career advancing to the Weſt:
When Babylon in ſplendor ſhone ſupreme,
The miſty foreſt cloth'd, and damp moraſs,
Albion's fair iſle ſcarce riſen from the waves.
Increaſing years have taught progreſſive ſkill
In ev'ry Science, and in each fair art.
And when theſe ſhall have reach'd the higheſt pitch
Deſtin'd to man in this imperfect ſtate;
And when his ardent pow'rs, confin'd below
Within this narrow ſphere, no longer ſoar,
To other worlds he ſtraight directs his flight,
And better climes, in æther leſs confin'd,
Continuing there his high, progreſſive, courſe.
For when unnumber'd millions have come forth,
And when the ſurface of this globe is nought
But human carnage, and each atom once
Has liv'd a portion of ſome human frame;
And every particle of living ſpirit,
That gave them animation, has appear'd,

And thought, and acted in ſome human brain.——
Then ſhall the mighty maſter interpoſe,
In majeſty more awful than when firſt
Creation roſe beneath his forming hand,
And at his voice the ſcatter'd elements
Again ſhall reaſſemble, and unite
Each to its proper portion, never more
Henceforth to ſeparate; the living fire,
That once inform'd a human frame, ſhall find
Its antient habitation, now rear'd up
In fairer ſplendor, and immortal ſtrength;
No longer groſs, or earthly, or confin'd
To this inferior region, but prepar'd
To traverſe infinite, and feaſt with gods,
To trace the mighty counſels of the ſkies,
To live in ev'ry ſphere, and viſit far
Each province of the great CREATOR's reign,
To mark the ways of Providence in each,
The different education that it gives
To different natures, and its various care;
And all the ſtreams thro' which its goodneſs flows,
Myſterious oft, but terminating ſtill
In one wide ocean of unbounded bliſs.

O!

O! BLIND to truth, and to the ways of Heav'n,
And all the wonders of OMNIPOTENCE,
Who doubt the efficacy of that Pow'r,—
Immortal, and ſupreme, the Source of life,
Which gave exiſtence,—to renew its gift;
Which faſhion'd firſt the curious forms of things,
To call once more the ſcatter'd elements,
And join them in a new and fairer form,
Chang'd, but the ſame, exalted and improv'd.

AND knoweſt thou not the deſtiny of man,
Decreed of old? His nature was deſign'd
A wondrous monument of ſkill divine,
A compoſition ſtrange of living fire,
Active, and ardent, join'd to coldeſt clay.
Perhaps there may be under other ſkies,
In diſtant regions of the univerſe,
More perfect natures that behold and judge
All things as preſent, into whoſe fair climes
Nor time, nor fickly change e'er bent their way,—
But human reaſon cannot act, reflect,
Or think, imagine, or compare, or judge,
Without the aid of memory, which ſtill
Preſents paſt images; and memory

Is

Is but a waxen writing on the brain,
An ever-moving engine, rul'd by laws
Mechanic, little govern'd by the will;
And ever as it turns, it ſhews the train
Of paſt ideas fair, as mark'd at firſt,
By the perceiving, active, judging pow'r,
That lives, and feels within the human frame.
Unleſs the body to the mind were join'd,
The active principle perhaps might live,
But, never could it recognize the ſoft,
And tender images which once it knew;
Ne'er could it recollect the pleaſing forms
Of beauty, and of goodneſs which it lov'd,
Its early friendſhips, and the ſtruggles hard,
And all the trials of its mortal ſtate.

I SEE, I ſee the burſting earth unveil
Its various treaſures, heaving all with life,
In golden plumage riſing, and aloft
Bearing away the ſurface of the globe,
Leaving beneath them but a rocky maſs;
Which, melted now by purifying flames,
Becomes, once more, an habitation fit
For beings deſtin'd to ſucceed to man,
But, differing far in nature, and in form;

Well pleas'd the gracious Maker ſhall behold,
The mighty wonders of his own right hand;
The rude and maſſy globes of unwrought clay
Chang'd into living natures form'd to riſe
To endleſs heights of excellence and joy.

By awful contemplation rapt, I feel,
In ſad preſage, the ſilence of that hour
Of dread amazement, and dire expectation,
When horror univerſal ſhall ariſe,
Array'd in Stygian vapour, and on high
The fires of heav'n ſhall ſicken and decay;
And when the form gigantic ſhall deſcend,
And from the trumpet's horrid throat ſhall pour
The blaſt terrific that muſt wake the dead.
I hear afar the riſing thunders roll,
The ſhout of angels, and the groans of hell;
Already I behold the brazen vault,
The awful darkneſs, and the livid glare
Of ſmother'd light'nings, and the fatal craſh
Of ruin'd worlds ruſhing to deſtruction.——
But what are theſe? And what is all the pomp
Of GOD's deſcending, and of worlds on fire?
My ſoul rejoices in the furious ſtorm
Of ſtruggling elements, the whirlwind fierce,

The

The howling tempeſt, and the torrent's rage;
It ſcorns the terrors of the vulgar breaſt,
And, earneſt, waits for other ſcenes than theſe.
Yes,—Thou great Searcher of the ſecret thought!
Well doſt thou know the weakneſs, and the cares,
And all the ſorrows which on man await;
Thine is this energy of living fire,
That thinks, and ſoars, and ſcans thy mighty ways.
What is there in this heart that is not thine?
By thee beſtow'd, and cheriſh'd by thy hand:
Long was it foſter'd by thy ceaſeleſs care,
Kind in ſeverity, in harſhneſs mild:
Oft it was weak, and much of ſorrow knew;
But never was its native honour ſtain'd
By one ungen'rous, one unworthy wiſh;
Ne'er did it love whom it would bluſh to own
Before the flaming hoſts of heav'n, and Thee!
Grant but the objects of its tenderneſs,
Its early friendſhip, and its deareſt care,
Surrounded by thy works, where love and truth
Immortal reign, it aſks no higher bliſs——
No golden palaces, nor happy iſles
Rich with luxurious fragrance does it ſeek;
But fill'd with goodneſs, and with tender joy,
This ardent ſpirit, kindling high, ſhall riſe,

In every fair accompliſhment improv'd,
To heights divine of ſcience and of love;
And while the years roll on of endleſs time,
Beloving, and belov'd, ſhall often lift
Th' enraptur'd eye in gratitude to Thee.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE END.